



Montana Drought Advisory Committee



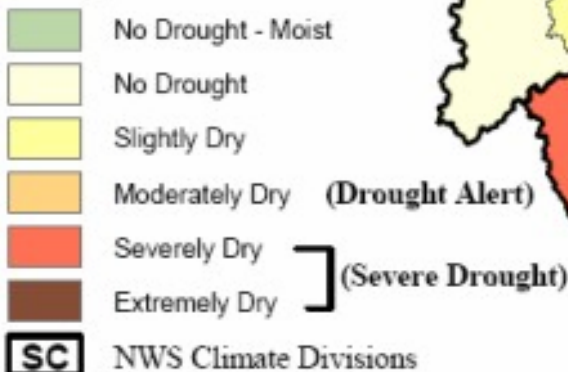
Montana Agricultural
Statistics Service

Peggy Stringer
Director

March 14, 2006

Montana Drought Status by County - October 21, 2004

Drought Status



Drought Alert - Governor's Drought Advisory Committee strongly encourages local officials to convene local drought committees.

Severe Drought - Local officials should have local drought planning efforts underway or should reconvene the local drought committee at the earliest opportunity.

For recommended responses, see the Drought Response Plan.



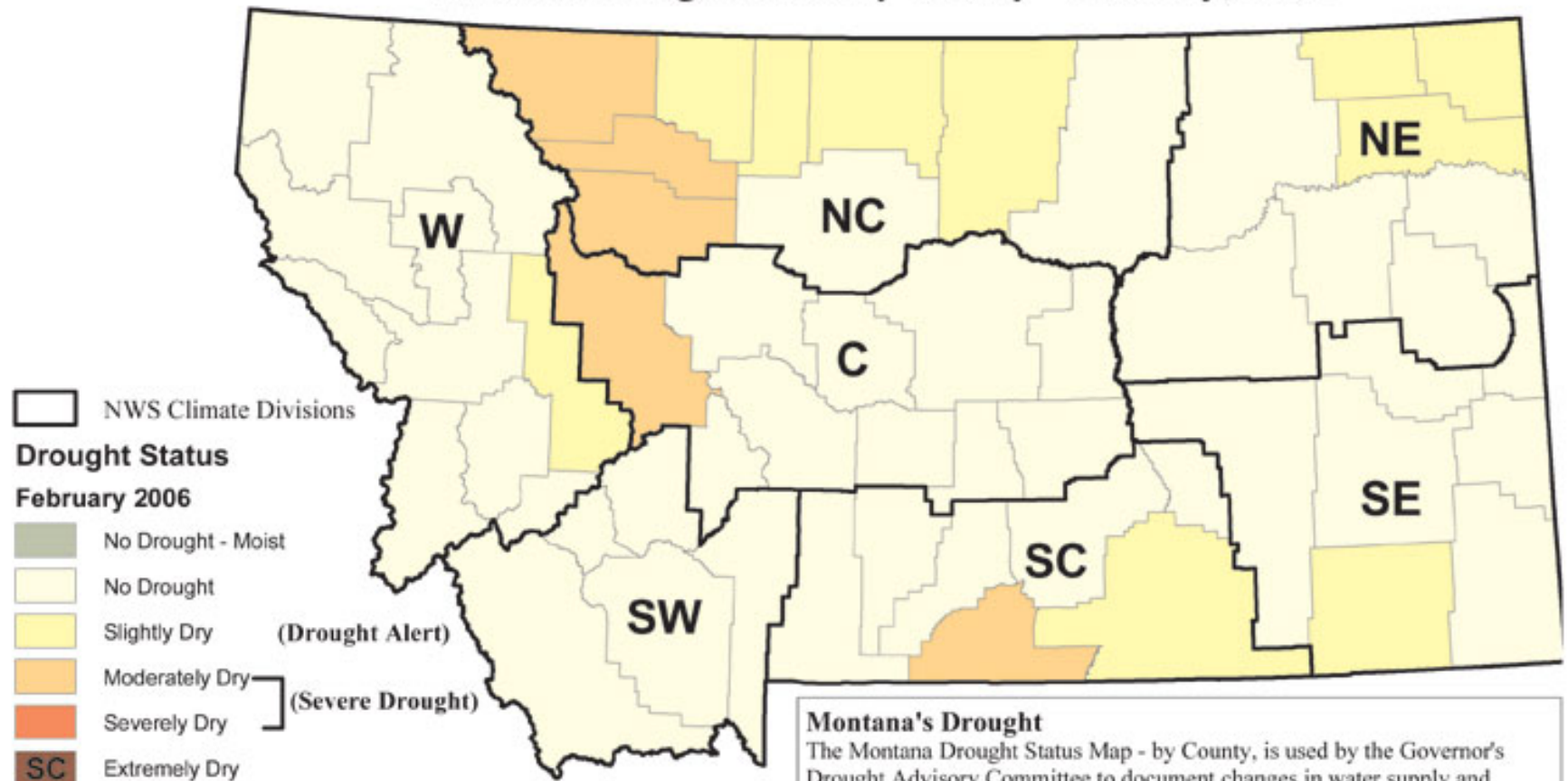
Montana's Drought

Severe drought conditions have been present over large areas of Montana for four or more consecutive years. Long-term drought impacts, including low soil moisture, reservoir storage, groundwater, and forest fuel moisture levels, continue to exist in areas where short-term relief may be present or develop.

The Governor's Drought Advisory Committee determines a monthly drought status for counties between March and October. The drought status map is used to alert counties to drought conditions so they may respond appropriately.

For more information regarding the determination of the drought status or the activities of the Drought Advisory Committee visit:
<http://nris.state.mt.us/drought/>

Montana Drought Status by County - February, 2006



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Severe Drought - Local officials should have local drought planning efforts underway or should reconvene the local drought committee at the earliest opportunity.

For recommended responses, see the Drought Response Plan.



<http://nris.state.mt.us/drought/>

Montana's Drought

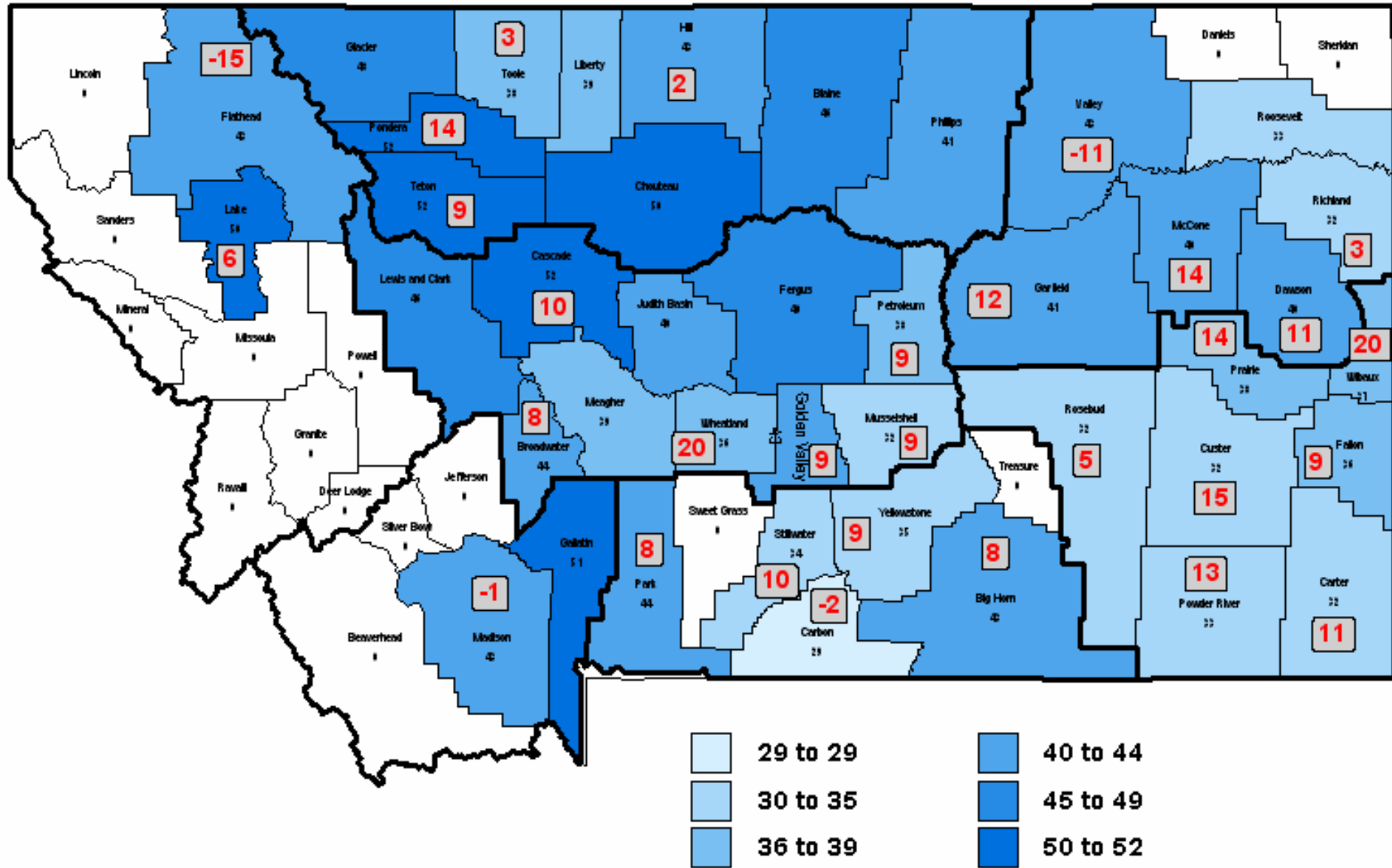
The Montana Drought Status Map - by County, is used by the Governor's Drought Advisory Committee to document changes in water supply and moisture conditions on a monthly basis and to alert counties so timely responses are possible. The descriptive categories of the Drought Status map correspond with known and anticipated levels of economic hardship on water uses and moisture dependence due to drought. Recovery from up to six consecutive years of severe drought conditions continues across large areas of Montana. High temperatures, declining streamflow, and wildfire are common in any given summer in Montana and do not necessarily indicate the presence of drought.

For more information regarding the determination of the drought status or the activities of the Drought Advisory Committee visit:

<http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/Drought/Index.html>

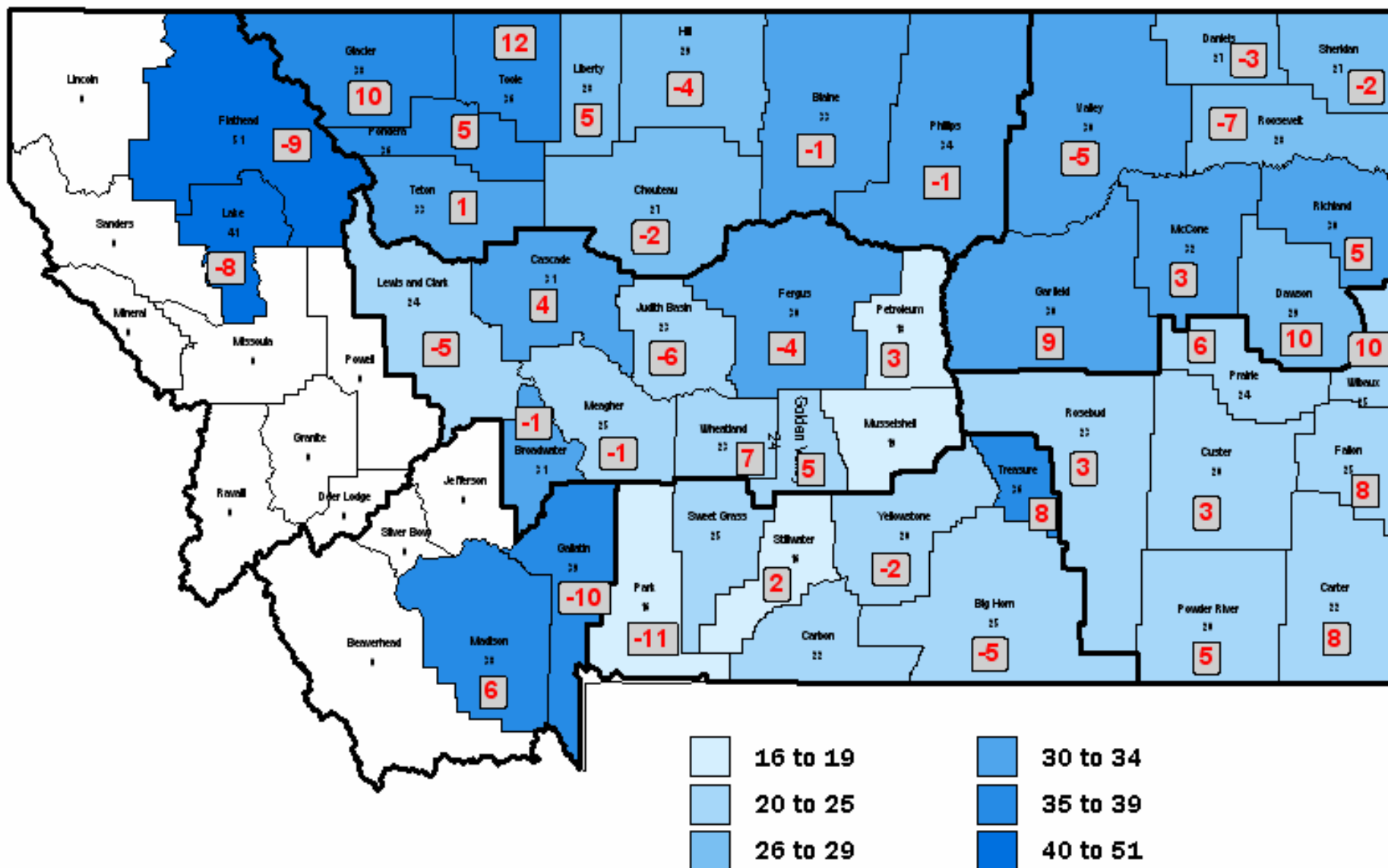
Winter Wheat 2005

Yield



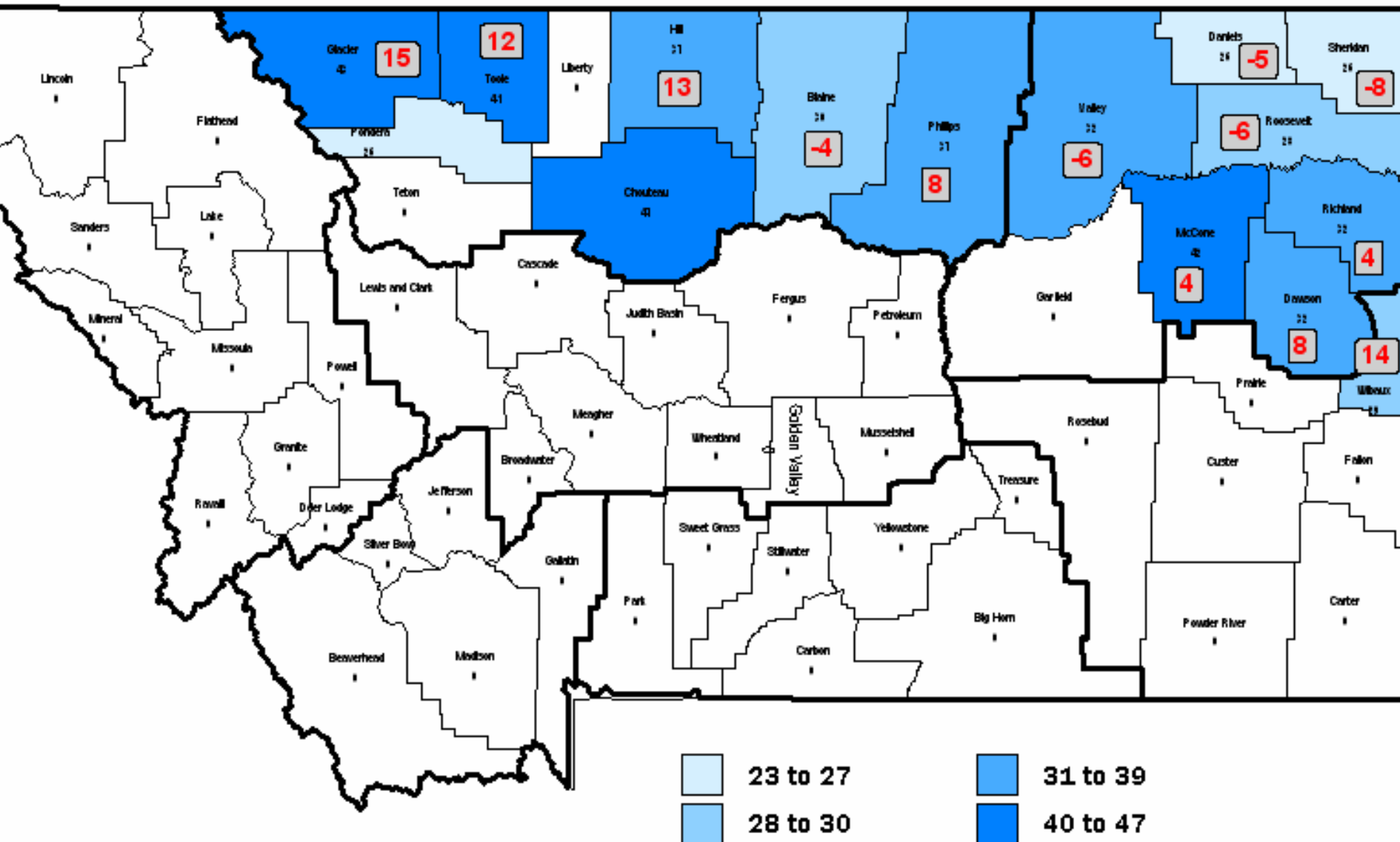
Spring Wheat 2005

Yield



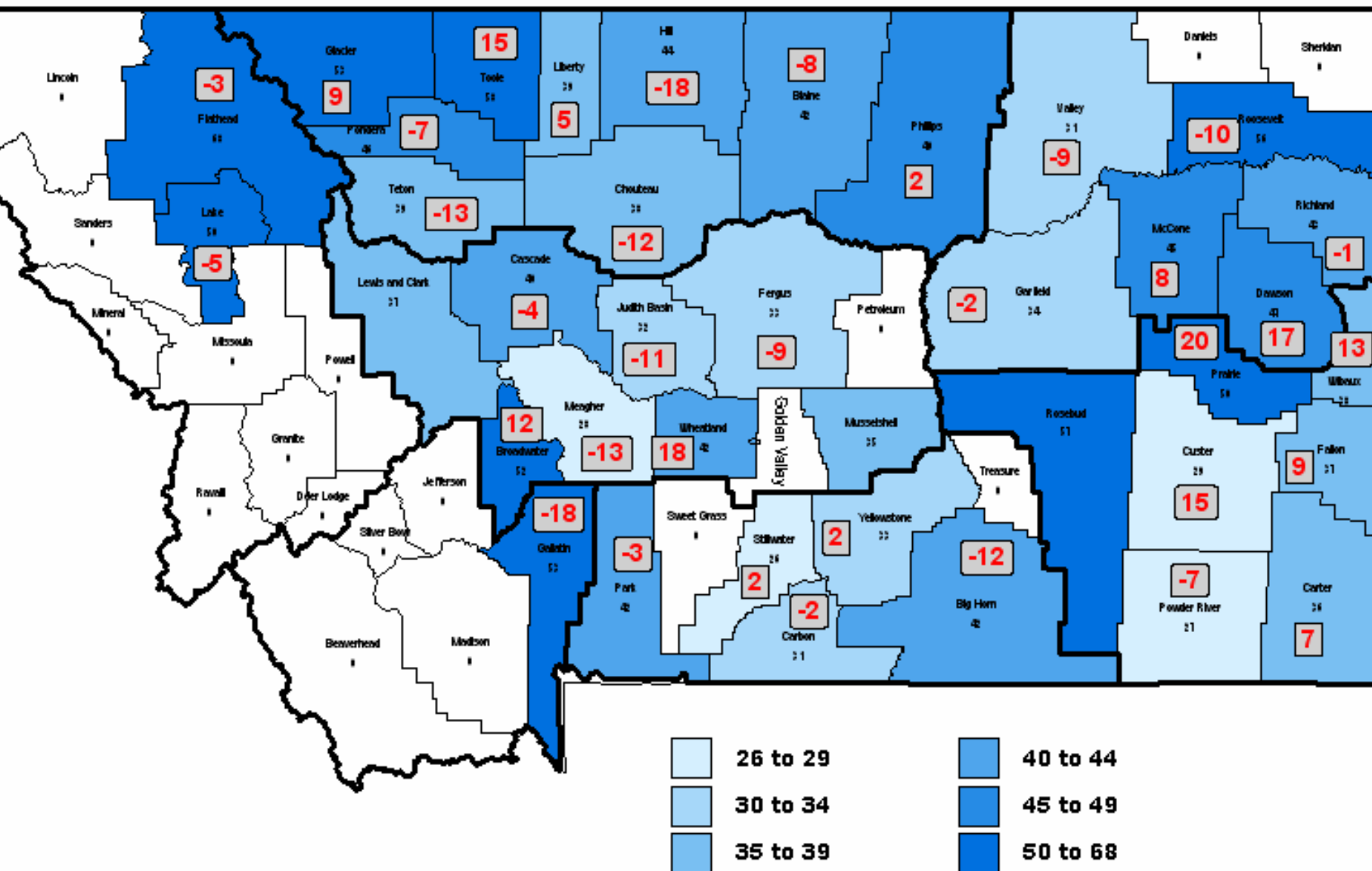
Durum Wheat 2005

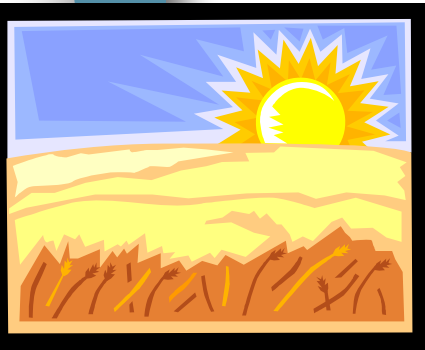
Yield



Barley 2005

Yield



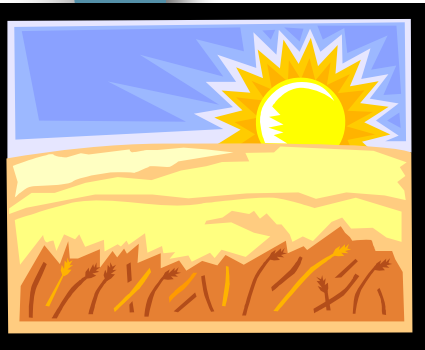


Crop Weather Report

Month Ending February 28, 2006

- February had wide-ranging temperatures
- High of 73 degrees
- Low of -43 degrees
- With departure from normal range of +7 to -8

March 14, 2006

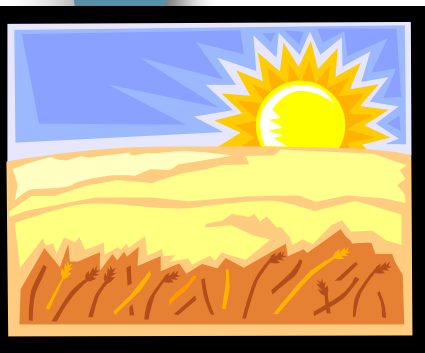


Crop Weather Report

Month Ending February 28, 2006

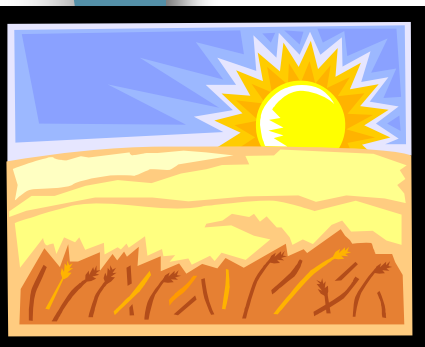
- The entire state received some precipitation in February
 - Normal precipitation for February ranges from a little over an inch in the North West to less than one quarter of inch in North Central
 - Average precipitation about 1/2 inch
- Two-thirds of the stations reported less than average precipitation for February
- Of the stations reporting since Oct 1, 2005
 - ❖ 0% reported less than 50% normal precipitation compared to 21% last year
 - ❖ 20% reported better than 50% but less than normal compared to 68% last year
 - ❖ 80% reported normal precipitation or better compared to 1% last year

March 14, 2006

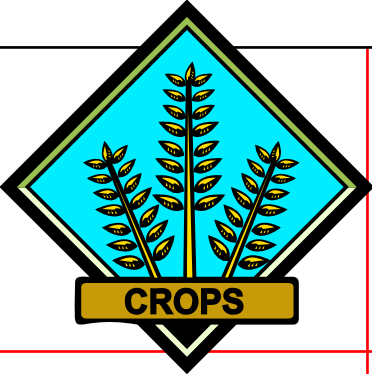


2006 Montana Winter Wheat Acreage

- ❖ 2 million acres
- ❖ Down 7% from 2005
- ❖ Down 150,000 acres from 2005



Winter Wheat Crop Condition declined from last month and last year

	Feb. 2006	Jan. 2006	Feb. 2005
Excellent	6%	8%	3%
Good	32%	44%	45%
Fair	50%	41%	40%
Poor	12%	7%	11%
Very Poor	0%	0%	1%

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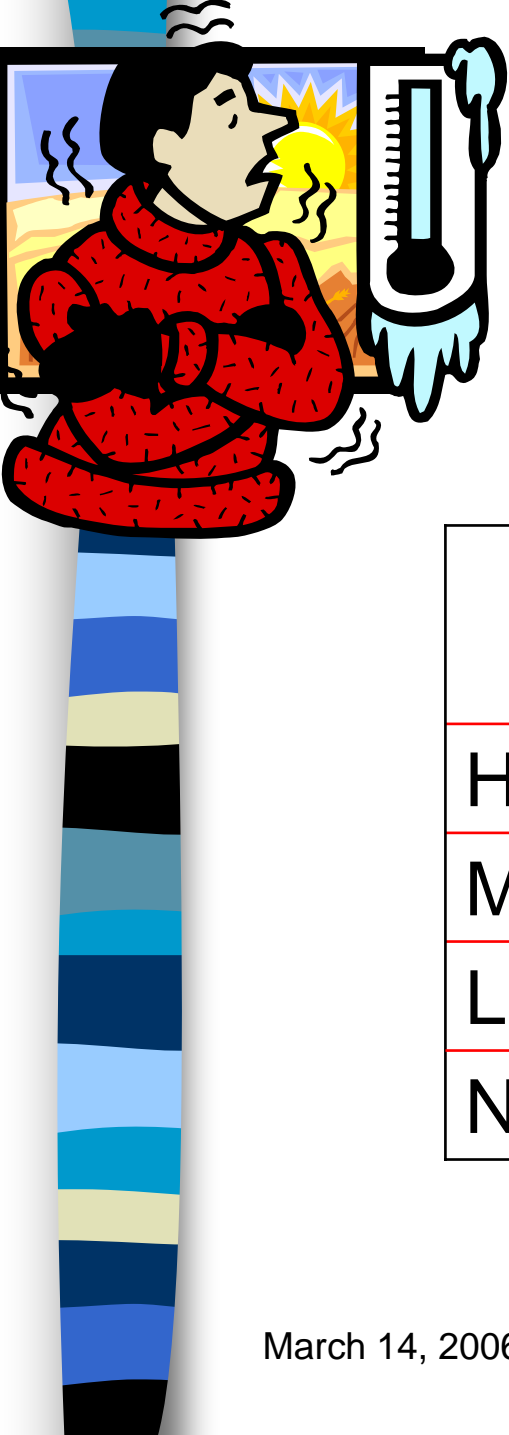


Winter Wheat

February had more wind damage than last month, less than last year

	Feb. 2006	Jan. 2006	Feb. 2005
Heavy	2%	2%	4%
Moderate	12%	13%	22%
Light	44%	38%	35%
None	42%	47%	39%

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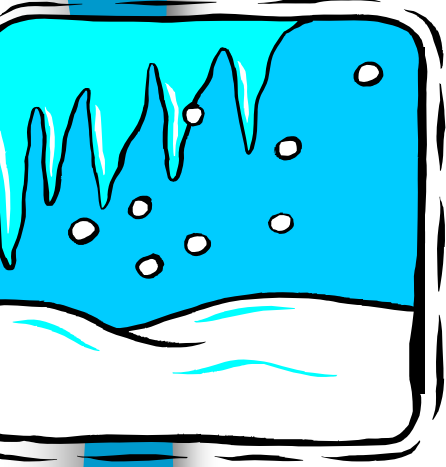


Winter Wheat

Freeze & Drought Damage for February worse than last month, better than last year

	Feb. 2006	Jan. 2006	Feb. 2005
Heavy	1%	1%	3%
Moderate	24%	7%	20%
Light	26%	22%	46%
None	49%	70%	31%

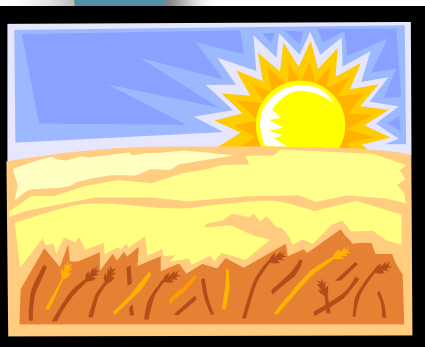
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Winter Wheat Snow Cover Protectiveness for February mostly very poor to poor

	Feb. 2006	Jan. 2006	Feb. 2005
Excellent	0%	0%	0%
Good	12%	1%	0%
Fair	5%	4%	1%
Poor	25%	13%	8%
Very Poor	58%	82%	91%

March 14, 2006



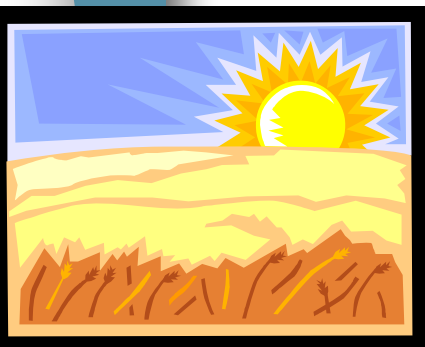
Crop Weather Report

February 2006

- Topsoil moisture percent nearly same as last month, way ahead of last year

	Feb. 2006	Jan. 2006	Feb. 2005
Very Short	10%	7%	53%
Short	38%	40%	32%
Adequate	50%	49%	14%
Surplus	2%	4%	1%

March 14, 2006



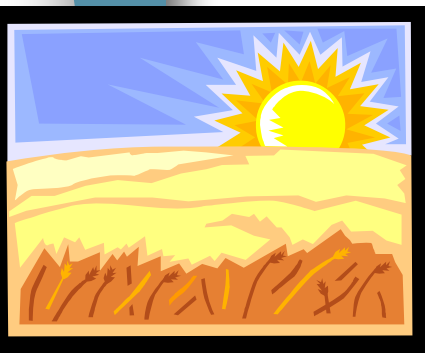
Crop Weather Report

February 2006

- Subsoil moisture behind last month but way ahead of last year

	Feb. 2006	Jan. 2006	Feb. 2005
Very Short	21%	13%	61%
Short	44%	43%	30%
Adequate	34%	41%	9%
Surplus	1%	3%	0%

March 14, 2006



Cattle numbers in Montana

Cattle inventory Jan. 1, 2006

- ❖ 2.40 million head
- ❖ Up 2% from 2.35 million head in 2005

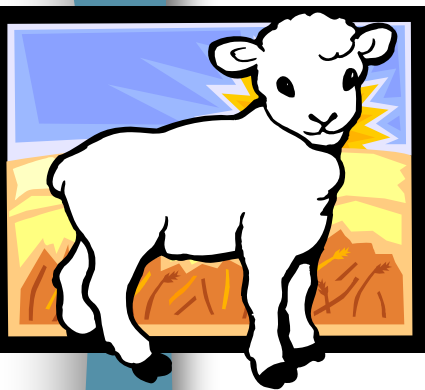


Livestock Grazing

- Open grazing behind last year

	Feb. 2006	Jan. 2006	Feb. 2005
Open	65%	79%	82%
Difficult	14%	11%	10%
Closed	21%	10%	8%

March 14, 2006



Calving behind & lambing slightly ahead of last year

	Feb. 2006	Jan. 2006	Feb. 2005
Calving	29%	5%	34%
Lambing	19%	5%	18%

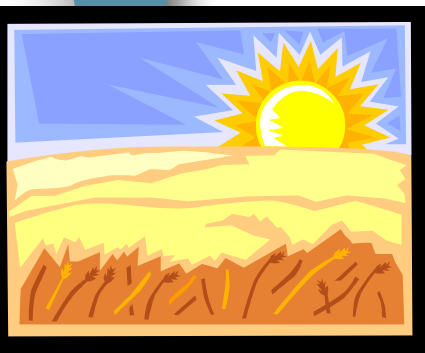
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Supplemental feeding in February same as last year

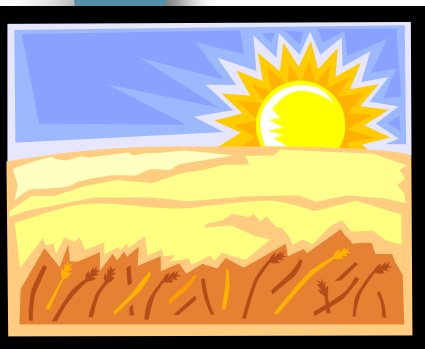
	Feb. 2006	Jan. 2006	Feb. 2005
Cattle & calves	97%	94%	97%
Sheep & lambs	96%	95%	96%

March 14, 2006



December Hay Stocks

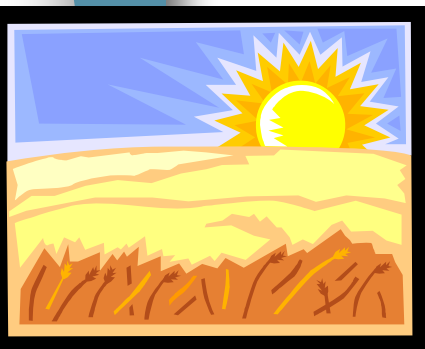
- 5.4 million tons on December 1, 2005
 - ❖ 23% more than last year
 - ❖ Record High hay stocks
 - ❖ Average hay stocks usage by ranchers 1.8 million tons between May & November 2005



March Ag Intentions Survey

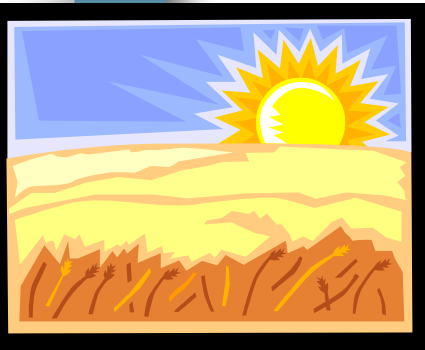
- First look at farmers' plans for 2006 crop year
- Find out how weather conditions & fertilizer and fuel prices will affect farmers' plans to seed crops in 2006
- Release on March 31, 2006

March 14, 2006



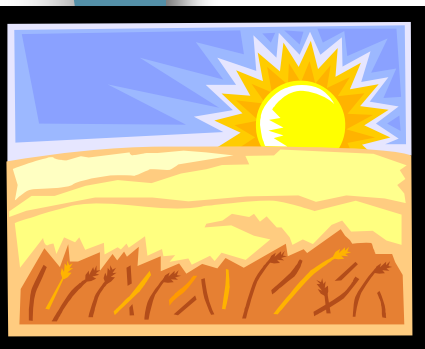
Coming Up

- Weekly Crop Weather starts April 3th
- Hay county estimates April 12th
- March Prospective Planting Report
March 31st



2005 a GOOD Year for Montana's Agriculture

- ❖ Record high cattle prices
- ❖ Value of Montana's cattle inventory \$2.5 billion.
- ❖ Wheat & barley prices remained sluggish
- ❖ Increased crop production
- ❖ Improved wheat & barley crop values by \$40 million from last year to the highest level since 1997.



To Sum It Up

- 2005 was a great year for Montana farmers and ranchers
- Spring seeding conditions are better than last year
- Need more moisture to improve conditions
- Winter wheat condition declined in February due to extreme temperature fluctuations
- Ranchers have abundant hay supplies

March 14, 2006